

ACCENT on Kids

Children will be tomorrow what we make of them today.

June/July 2007

Statewide Programs Help Protect Children

Agency implements SACWIS and CAPMIS

by Kay Marshall & Jason DeBord

Everyone wants the children in our community to be safe. And this summer, Franklin County Children Services will implement a new computerized information system and a new model for structured decision-making designed to assist in keeping children safer.

In mid July, Children Services will convert to SACWIS, the statewide automated child welfare information system. All data will be entered in a consistent manner by agencies across the state. This will allow for prior information on a child or family to be accessed by any county Children Services agency, which will help workers conducting investigations of child abuse and neglect. This will also enable the state to have aggregate data from each county for comparative purposes.

In addition, Franklin County Children Services has begun using CAPMIS, the comprehensive assessment and planning model – interim solution. This model involves structured decision-making from the time a child or family is referred to the agency and throughout the life of the case. It provides tools for assessing a child's safety, developing safety plans for children, and conducting family reunification assessments. It will help Children Services workers better protect and care for children who may be unsafe, and avoid intervening in the lives of families where parents are able

to protect their children.

CAPMIS prioritizes identifying the safety of a child when making decisions, rather than current practice which primarily assesses risk to a child. A child is safe when there are no immediate threats of serious harm present, or when the family can protect the child from identified risks. Prior to the implementation of CAPMIS, Children Services would look at the current situation and how likely the family was to mistreat or repeat mistreatment of children. Now the agency will determine its response by evaluating safety threats, the child's vulnerability, and the family's protective capacities.

Professionals and citizens who report suspected abuse or neglect may see differences in how Children Services handles their calls. Some situations that may have been investigated will not be, while other situations that would not have been investigated may be. For example, superficial bruising on a non-sensitive area (limbs or buttocks), which is in line with parental discipline would not be considered abuse. However, bruises that cause serious harm, or bruises in a sensitive area such as the head, face or chest, would be. Babies affected by any drugs, including marijuana, will now be assessed.

An initial assessment of a child's safety is required within four days from the initiation of the investigation. If a child is not safe, a safety plan will be created with the family. If further help is needed, the child and family will be referred to community agencies, or a case will be opened, and in



See how to report abuse on page 3.

some cases, the child will be removed from their care. Services will be offered to families to resolve safety threats, reduce the likelihood of further abuse or neglect, and promote child-well being and permanency.

"We want all Franklin County children to be safe and free from harm," said Eric Fenner, executive director of Franklin County Children Services. "In the vast majority of families, parents protect their own children from harm, but in some families children are abused or neglected. By incorporating the best practices in our profession, and by following the CAPMIS guidelines, we can use our resources to protect and care for the most vulnerable children in our community while respecting the rights of parents to raise their children as they see fit."

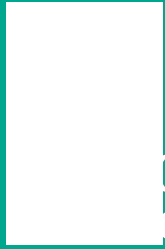
SACWIS and CAPMIS implementation is expected to take several months. Children Services employees have been undergoing extensive training for the past several months and the agency is expecting no disruption of services or operations during the transition period.



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All Kids Count Message Important to Kids

by Doris Calloway Moore

A recent Franklin County Children Services commercial asks children, "What would you give for a safe, stable and permanent home?" As the children in the commercial declare their willingness to relinquish things that are most valuable to them, like a favorite toy, one begins to appreciate the significance of a permanent home and the anguish children feel who do not have one.

More than 500,000 children in child welfare systems throughout the United States long for that elusive security and stability that is often taken for granted. That's why each year Children Services launches a major campaign to recruit foster and adoptive parents and volunteers for Franklin County's most vulnerable children.

All Kids Count and They're Counting on You has been the message of the agency's county-wide recruitment campaign for the past 16 years. And although the community has responded with hundreds of calls each year, children still wait for families and mentors.

Currently, children under the care of Children Services could benefit from 100 additional foster families, 200 adoptive families and at least 100 additional mentors. The All Kids Count campaign will address this need at a celebration on Monday July 16 from 11:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. on the Statehouse lawn. As information is circulated at the event, multicultural entertainment will be provided by the Richens-Timm Academy of Irish Dance; the Ohio Hispanic Coalition's youth dance team; Tinkling Dancers, a Phillipino dance team; and Children Services' Therapeutic Arts Program (TAP) performers.

According to Daryle Cobb, foster care recruitment specialist and event organizer, White Castle, Mike-Sell, Papa John's and Roosters will provide complimentary food.



Eight-year-old Destiny and her brother Don-za, 5, would give anything to be adopted by a loving family.

Ice cream, popcorn, water and pop will also be on hand. "Although this event is entertaining, it is driven by the need to draw attention to the plight of waiting children. Throughout the day, that is the message you will hear," said Cobb.

Another highlight of the campaign will be a motivational presentation by Cedric Riley, who will answer the question, "What would I give?" A student at The Ohio State University, Cedric knows the pain of living in uncertainty and the joy of adoption. Cedric spent more than half of his life in foster care under Cuyahoga County Children Services before he was adopted at the age of 16. Cedric will share his trials but, more importantly, his successes with foster youth, social work staff, and foster and adoptive parents during two presentations. *Teens Need a Home, Too!* and *Success is a Choice!* are the topics he will deliver at 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. in Children Services' Family Center, 855 W. Mound St., on July 19th. The public is encouraged to attend both the kickoff event and hear this dynamic young man.

For more information on Children Services' events or on becoming a foster parent, adoptive parent or volunteer, call 341-6060.

Simba Celebrates 20 Years

by Steve Jones

Franklin County Children Services' Simba program celebrated its 20th Simba breakfast celebration. The Simba program is a mentoring program that matches African American men from the community with African American boys under the care of Children Services.

The Simba program began because there was a need to instill cultural pride and awareness of self to the African American boys being served through Children Services. At the time, the Volunteer program only had four African American men serving as mentors.

Twenty years ago, agency staff member Karen Bell and community leaders Kwesi Kambon and Clifford Tyree recognized the problem and presented a proposal to then Executive Directive Margaret Sandberg. They proposed that a full-time staff position be created to head Simba - a program that would recruit African American men to serve as mentors to African American boys under agency care. Simba started with four mentors, and within six months 40 boys had been matched with mentors.

Clifford Tyree, retired administrator from the city's Youth Services Bureau and one of the founders of Simba says, "In today's society children need all the support they can get. The Simba program has been instrumental in providing that support and has impacted many youths in our community."

Over the past two decades, hundreds of Simba mentors have helped shape the lives of hundreds of children. These children's lives have been changed through the friendship, support and guidance of the mentoring relationship. The program has also helped youths through rights of passage, trips and tours, cookouts, sporting events, community projects and educational opportunities. Each mentor gains a satisfaction in knowing he has made a difference in at least one young man's life.

This year's recent Simba celebration honored the programs founders, Bell, Kambon and Tyree. In addition, Simba mentors with 15 or more years of service were honored, along with master drummer and Enstooled Elder Tony West for his many years of support to Simba.

Simba continues to grow, but the program is in desperate need of more African American men to mentor young boys. For more information on becoming a mentor with Simba, contact Steve Jones at 275-2683 or smjones@fccs.co.franklin.oh.us



ACCENT on Kids Adoption Summer Activities

by Joetta McCruter-Polk

Children Services is celebrating adoption this summer with outdoor public awareness events and recruitment activities.

Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) will host an adoption picnic and carnival, where children who are available for adoption and families waiting to adopt will meet in a fun atmosphere. The Thursday, June 14 festivities will include games, rides, miniature golf and food.

Children Services believes in giving prospective adoptive parents various opportunities to meet children available for adoption. The agency will host a weekend picnic at a local park on Saturday, July 14. Adoption picnics are open to families who have approved home studies.

Thirteen-year-old Steven is waiting for a permanent family and looks forward to the adoption picnics. He is affectionate, humorous and likes to entertain others. Steven needs a family who is committed to him for a lifetime.

The Adopt-A-Child Foundation is sponsoring a Children Services float in the Red, White and Boom parade. The parade takes place right before Columbus' downtown Red, White and Boom fireworks display on July 3. Adopt-A-Child Foundation President Gary Turner says that it's an honor to be involved with an agency that protects children. "It's always a great feeling when our float is moving down the parade route and we hear the crowd applauding and saying, 'Keep up the good work,'" said Turner.

For adoption information, call 341-6060.



Steven is waiting for an adoptive family.

Information for Reporting Abuse or Neglect

- Name and address of child
- Child's birth date or age
- If the child is especially vulnerable due to age, disability, other
- School or day care the child attends
- Names and addresses of parents or caregivers
- Names and addresses of alleged perpetrator(s), if known
- Description of the abuse or neglect, and what or who caused it
- Names of people who help keep the child safe, provide care or support

Child Abuse Prevention Event Honors Youths, Family and Child Advocates

by Pam Prosser

Franklin County Children Services and the Citizens Advisory Committee hosted the annual Child Abuse Prevention Breakfast in April. Agency youths, a social worker, a client family and community advocates were honored.

Rising Up and Moving On Awards

Tiffany Neighbarger had a difficult childhood and troubles in school. But with much self-determination she made changes. She now has over a 3-point grade average, volunteers at a hospital, and has a job. This fall she is heading to the University of Toledo.

Michael Talbert has an impressive list of accomplishments that is even more impressive considering the turmoil he has faced. He is a member of the National Honor Society, plays baseball and football, and holds the rank of Chief Petty Officer in the ROTC program. Michael has aspirations to attend the Naval Academy.

Jack Donahue College Scholarships

Toya Skeete is an intelligent and motivated young woman who has overcome many obstacles. She has received honor roll awards, and has been recognized for academic achievement by the Young Scholars Program. She will attend The Ohio State University, where she plans to major in business.

Christopher Neighborgall is an exemplary student and is in the top ten percent of his class. He has persevered through difficult situations. He is described as dedicated, focused, conscientious and hardworking. Christopher will be attending Columbus State Community College.

Alvin Hadley UNCF College Scholarships

Elita Little is determined to be successful despite the many obstacles life has presented her. Elita worked hard to get good grades, graduate from high school and be a full-time mom. She plans to go to college and become a lawyer.

Marshanda Powell plans to become a child protection social worker because she feels her social workers have been role models and guided her along a positive



Youths honored - (from left) Christopher Neighborgall, Tiffany Neighbarger and Michael Talbert.



Family honoree - Bernie Galicia (right) with Dennis Bryant, Deangelo and Raphael.



Social worker honored - Monica Taylor.

path. She is a good student and will attend the OSU campus in Newark.

Family Achievement Award

Because of Bernie Galicia's history of drug and alcohol abuse, three of her four children have been adopted. After being released from jail in 2005, Galicia wanting to have baby Deangelo returned to her. She immediately began rehabilitation, counseling and parenting classes. Deangelo was returned to Galicia and the two are doing well. Galicia says that she is happy for the first time in her life and is grateful for the support of foster and adoptive dad Dennis Bryant (he adopted her son Raphael).

Nancy Fitzgives Child Protection Award

Monica Taylor is a dedicated and committed child protection caseworker. Her caseload of unruly and delinquent adolescents is challenging, but she is able to work through their defenses and find remarkable ways to connect with the troubled teens. Many of the youths she counsels see her as a mentor, a teacher and a confidant. The importance of education is something that Taylor emphasizes to youths. Thanks to her consistent support, six youths on her caseload are graduating from high school this year.

Community Advocate Awards

A Pinwheels for Prevention Award was presented to former Children Services Executive

Director John Saros for his 40-year commitment of making life better for children throughout Ohio. Through his leadership he has proven that he truly believes in preventing child abuse.

Community Advocate Awards were given to individuals, organizations and businesses that have donated time, effort and funds to help children in need. Recipients include the Franklin County Commissioners and The Limited Brands for honoring college-bound youths; WBNS 10TV News Reporter Tracy Townsend for support and news coverage of children's issues; COSI Columbus for help promoting foster and adoption efforts; The Columbus Blue Jackets and Nikolai Zherdev for bringing professional hockey to agency youths; Dr. Jackie Berkowitz for contributions in orthodontic treatment for agency youths; Chase Home Finance & JPMorgan Chase Foundation for contributions to mentors and children; and Mazda and Toyota Direct for hosting a Christmas party for foster children.

Youths Exhibit Talents Through Art

by Larry Whiteside

Children under the care of Franklin County Children Services displayed a variety of expressions in the fourth annual Art Exhibit & Silent Auction. This year's theme was *Thoughts and Feelings from a Child's Viewpoint*. Agency youths available for adoption, in foster care, and participants in TAP recently displayed their works of art and received many accolades. The types of entries included crayon drawings of a child's wish for a permanent family, sketches of civil rights leaders, and poetic verses. The youths' art represented their innermost thoughts and many revealed a look into the positive impact Children Services has had in their lives. Seventeen-year-old D'nyhn poses next to his prize-winning painting. The silent auction raised more than \$800 for the Franklin Village Children's Fund. Since tax dollars can only be spent on basic care needs for children, the Children's Fund helps cover other expenses children may need while in care.



Recent Retirees

Ellen Baugess began her service with Children Services in March 1987 as a clerical specialist in Facilities and Management. She later worked as a purchasing assistant in the Purchasing Department. Baugess was promoted to the Fiscal Department in 2001 as an account clerk III, where she remained until her retirement. She consistently displayed a willingness to help and a loyalty to those with whom she worked. Baugess always exemplified a strong dedication to the agency.

Phyllis Withers began her service with Children Services in August 1977 as a typist II in Staff Services. She was promoted to clerical specialist in 1979, then to secretary I and supervisor in 1984 and to administrative secretary I in 1989. She was promoted to administrative secretary II as the executive secretary to the executive director in 1994, where she remained until her retirement. Withers consistently and competently managed her duties, ably served the Children Services Board, and greatly contributed to the agency by conscientiously ensuring organization, accuracy and professionalism in the executive office. She won two awards for her creative ideas to improve agency services and staff morale, and chaired the clerical committee through numerous projects, including fundraising and developing clerical handbooks. Withers has exemplified commitment and dedication to the agency, working on levy campaigns, attending events and supporting youths in their programs.

Agency Premieres Parenting Tips in Lobbies

Something new will be visible in Children Services' lobbies this summer. Large television screens (purchased through AdoptOhio federal funds) will display several different videos for viewing by those waiting in the lobbies. One of the videos is a 10-minute segment on parenting tips featuring Executive Director Eric Fenner; Maureen Bosart, Children Services head nurse; Thelma Martinez, associate director at Intake and Investigations; Kevin Schoppert, supervisor in Emancipation; and Yvette McGee Brown, president of the Center for Child and Family Advocacy. The parenting video covers topics such as shaken baby syndrome, toilet training, temper tantrums, leaving children home alone and dealing with teenagers. There will also be other options including a community partnership video and a video on adoption and foster care.

Volunteers & Mentors Honored as Heroes

New Volunteers

Joel Badanes
Rory Benson
Kelli Beyeler
Debbie Bradley
Steve Brasier
Sharon Christman
Daniel Crease
Michelle Drobik
Phillip Dukes
Robin Fultz
LeHenry Givens
Eric Greene
Julie Holbein
Wendell Johnson
Teresa Jones
Eric McSwane
Matt Merriner
Holly Pasha
Angela Penrod
Kelly Phillimore
Kristi Reed
Colleen Sanzo
Jody & Sam Shamansky
Sophia Stephenson
Jane Thomas
Joyce Trammel
Amy Wood

Volunteer Recognition

5 Years

Mary Hollaway
Tenisha Johnson
Lynn Kidd-Freeman
Garry & Julia Moon
Terri Thiede
Rick & Rita Wanner

10 Years Molly Meyer

by **Billie Jones**

Heroes Aren't Born... They Volunteer was the theme of the 23rd Volunteer Reception that honored the dedicated service of Friendship Volunteers, along with College-Bound, Malaika and Simba Mentors. In 2006, 677 volunteers provided individual guidance to 604 children.

The Volunteer of the Year was College-Bound Mentor Denise Howerton who is currently matched with two youths. Howerton became a volunteer in 1999 and was matched with a 12-year-old girl who had significant issues and was in multiple foster homes and treatment facilities. Howerton traveled all over the state to provide her with the support, consistency and friendship she desperately needed. In 2006, she was matched with a young Ukranian immigrant named Nataliya who was finishing high school and wanted to pursue her dream of a college education. Through Howerton's guidance and support, Nataliya applied to college and currently attends Ohio University. While at the agency's fall college workshop, Howerton met a young man who was just beginning his dream of attending college, and now Howerton is matched with Dean, who will go to college next fall.

Two Simba mentors were awarded Most Inspirational Volunteer awards because together they make a difference for two brothers. Kenneth Golden has been matched with Judah, 12, for more than a year, and Mark Jackson is matched with brother David, 14. Both men are truly committed to their mentoring

relationship and have done many activities with both boys. When the boys were recently placed in foster care, Golden and Jackson were extremely helpful with their transition into their new home and school. The mentors provide structure and guidance for both boys and are excellent role models. Both are members of the Simba Advisory Committee and are involved with many Simba events.

Annette Scott was honored with the Outstanding Advisory

Committee award for her true dedication to Children Services and to foster parenting. Scott has been a foster parent for 16 years and provided a home for more than 40 teen girls. She has been the president of the Foster Parent Association and the Citizens Advisory Committee for eight years. While on CAC, she was a member of the Community Events Committee and the Jack Donahue College Scholarship Committee.

More volunteers and mentors are needed to make a difference in a children's lives. For more information about becoming a volunteer or mentor, call 275-2690.



Volunteer of the Year -
Denise Howerton



Most Inspirational Volunteers Kenneth Golden (left) and Mark Jackson with Judah and David.

Foster Parents Honored for Dedication and Loving Care to Children

by Megan Stevens

Franklin County Children Services recently celebrated its 43rd annual foster parent banquet as nearly 300 people filled the banquet hall at the Buckeye Hall of Fame Café to pay tribute to foster parents. This year's theme, *Look Beyond the Mirror*, acknowledged each foster family's ability to find strengths within themselves, as well as within their foster children. NBC 4 anchor Cabot Rea volunteered his time as the master of ceremonies.

Receiving the top honor as the **Foster Parents of the Year** were **Leah and Terry Bell**. Although the Bells have only been fostering for a year, they received this special recognition because every child placed in their home grows and thrives. They are always family oriented and extend that to the birth families of the children in their care. They are quick to provide support to birth families, especially during critical times. Their help and guidance was invaluable to a birth mother as she grieved the loss of a child.

Robert and Wendy Wawrzyniak were recognized as the **West Region Foster Family of the Year** and **First Runner-up** for Foster Parent of the Year. As foster



Foster Family of the Year - Leah and Terry Bell

parents since 2000, they have cared for 15 children with mild to moderate developmental delays. Many of the children were placed directly from the hospital and required a lot of patience and skill. It is not unusual for them to spend hours working on physical or occupational therapy techniques with their foster children.

The **East Region Foster Family of the Year** and **Second Runner-up** for Foster Parent of the Year award was given to **LaGrieta Holloway**. When Holloway had a newborn baby placed in her home she took off time from her job to help the infant adjust to his new surroundings and to secure child-care. She quickly learned how to navigate the maze of services and medical appointments, and made visits with the birth family, caseworkers, and others to meet the needs of the child.

The **New Foster Family of the Year** award was given to **Michael Daniels and Robert Maxon**. As new foster parents, they have already fostered four children, and have helped maintain vital connections with birth families while at the same time easing the trauma of separation.



New Foster Family of the Year, Robert Maxon and Michael Daniels

When caring for a teenager, they voluntarily altered their own work and personal schedules to transport him to and from school, as well as to all of his basketball practices and games.

Lyn Ellis and Julie Canfield were recognized as the **Treatment Foster Family of the Year** for their dedication and commitment to 20 children. Equipped with seemingly boundless energy, they often baby sit for teen moms, juggle their schedules to accommodate birth parents and staff, take numerous emergency placements, and truly go out of their way to help children receive whatever services they need.

A special recognition was given to foster parents **Chester and the late Helen Taylor**. The Taylors served as dedicated foster parents for 43 years. They were honored as the longest standing foster family ever for Children Services.



Treatment Foster Family of the Year, Lyn Ellis (left) and Julie Canfield (center), with Gena Phillips, president of the Foster Parent Association

Another ceremonial highlight of the evening was the installation of the newly elected Foster Parent Association officers: Gena Phillips, president; Marilyn Gravely, vice president; Amanda Scott, secretary; and Carol Jones, treasurer.

To learn more about becoming a foster parent, call 341-6060.

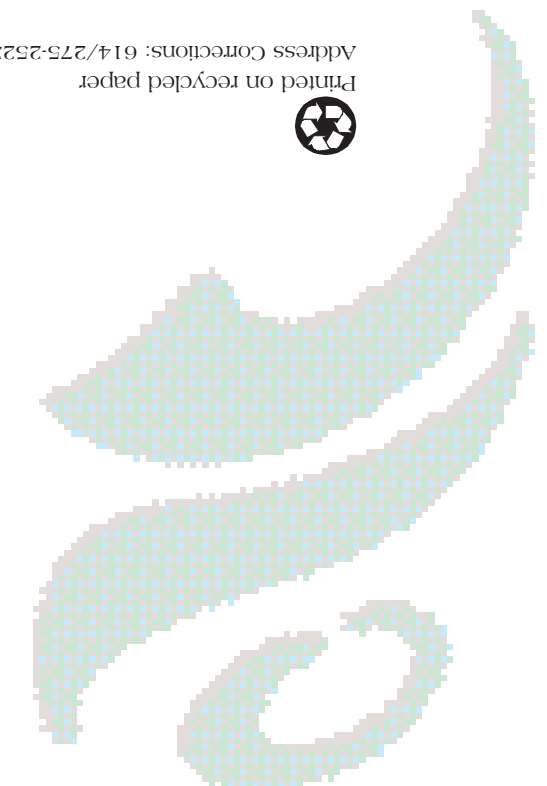
Agency Youths Go To Washington D.C.

During a spring break trip to Washington D.C., 27 youths in Children Services' Emancipation Department got to see many historical sights, including the White House. Employees from the agency's Emancipation Department accompanied the youths on the four-day tour of the nation's capitol. They enjoyed visiting the Memorials on the Mall, the Smithsonian Museums, the U.S. Supreme Court, Arlington National Cemetery and the Library of Congress (a tour set up by local Congressman Pat Tiberi).

The trip was part of the Emancipation Department's Project Enlightenment, which provides hands-on life experiences to create positive memories, develop experiential knowledge and improve self-esteem. The trip was paid for through federal Chafee funds, which are designed to help older teens in placement achieve independence and prepare for productive futures.



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